

LESSON PLAN: OPTION 3 EXERCISING YOUR CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS (EASY ACCESS)

MATERIALS PROVIDED

- Slide deck for 1 hour session
- Easy access slide deck for 1 hour session

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Devices with internet connection for the scavenger hunt

HOW THIS SESSION CAN FIT INTO YOUR WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH:

- Forming part of your pastoral provision
- Forming part of your PSHE provision
- Promoting the British value of democracy through SMSC development

LESSON PLAN:

Introduction (5 mins)

SLIDE 1 Title and welcome

- Welcome students and introduce the topic of rights - discuss some rights that students have as they get older. Explain that we will look at some specific rights about how we improve our community. Contextualise the session in terms of the election landscape i.e. is this being delivered after an election? When will your students be of an age eligible to vote?

SLIDE 2 Session aims

- Go through the session aims and learning questions you will explore.

Why is it important to know your civic and democratic rights? (10 mins)

SLIDE 3 Voting rights milestones

- Present the image highlighting the significance of different years in terms of rights to vote for different communities. Discuss who can vote now.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Have students discuss in small groups who was given rights and in which year.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED:

SLIDE 4

Setting up discussion

- Explain that we will be looking at some different rights together and to put their hands up if they have taken part in this or if they know someone who has.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** When students put their hands up you can prompt a longer discussion and share experiences of these rights.

SLIDE 5

Civic Rights

- Explore the different civic rights and clarify any gaps in knowledge.

SLIDE 6

Democratic Rights

- Explore the different democratic rights and clarify any gaps in knowledge.

SLIDE 7

Why people use these rights

- Elicit some responses from the students first, encouraging them to recall the different rights they have explored. Afterwards, show them some of the reasons people use these rights.

Who can vote and who do you vote for? (5 mins)

SLIDE 8

Zooming in on voting

- Use this slide to prompt discussions about any recent elections that might have happened. Use the images to discuss what happens on voting day.

SLIDE 9

Who you vote for

- Present the three different structures that Londoners vote in. You could use this opportunity to look up the specific representatives in your local area.

SLIDE 10

Voting eligibility

- Students will likely need an explanation of what 'eligibility' means i.e. people who are able to vote. For further definitions of [eligible EU citizens](#) and [eligible Commonwealth citizens](#) please click on the Electoral Commission links provided.

SLIDE 11

Registering to vote

- Explain that normally people register to vote online. There are other ways to register, but this is the quickest.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED:

SLIDE 12

Ways to vote

- Explain the different ways you can vote and what this means. If you feel comfortable, it would be helpful to explain a personal experience of voting or someone you know, explaining the process.

SLIDE 13

Photo Voter ID

- Discuss different forms of ID. Highlight that student IDs and a young person's Oyster card are not accepted forms of photo Voter ID.

How can you follow, talk or meet the people you vote for (representative)? (5 mins)

SLIDE 14

How can you engage

- Discuss the different ways you can engage with your representatives. There might be discussions about other ways of engaging, for example through social media.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Discuss the way students would prefer to have their voice heard.

SLIDE 15

Where can I find more information?

- Explain the different online resources that can be used. Use this opportunity to model how to search for something; elicit questions from the students that you can answer through using the websites shown.

How can you use resources to empower your civic and democratic rights? (15 mins)

SLIDE 16

Set up for the democracy scavenger hunt

- For this section, students will need access to a device and worksheet. These worksheets can be shared digitally or printed off. Students can complete the scavenger hunt as individuals or pairs.

SLIDE 17

Scavenger Hunt

- Explain the rules of the scavenger hunt and monitor students not using search engines to find answers.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Go through answers as a class and discuss differences in answers.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED:

SLIDE 18

Conclusion

- Wrap up the session by encouraging students to get their voices heard and emphasise that they are at the beginning of their relationship with democracy and civic life, but this is something that continues for the rest of their lives. It is in their hands to shape the future of London!

NOTES:

- The lesson plan is an easy access version that can be adapted to different contexts such as for EAL and SEN learners. You may need to adjust the complexity of language and examples accordingly for the needs of your learners.
- The Scavenger Hunt can be adapted for the needs of your students, feel free to change the questions accordingly. For example, if you are using this in an EAL setting, consider if you can incorporate the students' language if there are FAQ resources available i.e. how do you say "register to vote" in Portuguese? If using this in an SEN setting, consider how the Scavenger Hunt activity could help students understand how to navigate their personal needs when voting through the FAQs i.e. "What support can I get at a polling station if I vote in person?"

FAQS

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are designed to support practitioners to empower young people with their civic and democratic rights. For a comprehensive list of FAQs, head to:

<https://www.registertovote.london/resources/english-faqs>

Who can register and vote in London?

You can register to vote if you are resident (usually live) in London and are aged 16 or over (but you will not be able to vote until you are 18). Currently, British, Irish, qualifying Commonwealth, qualifying EU citizens and EU citizens with retained voting rights residing in London can register and vote. You can check your eligibility at

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/which-elections-can-i-vote>

How do I register to vote?

To register to vote you can head to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote and fill in the online form. It only takes a few minutes.

Do you need your National Insurance (NI) number to register to vote?

When you register to vote online, you are asked for your National Insurance (NI) number. Your NI number is used in the registration process as a unique identifier, the easiest and quickest way to confirm who you are. But don't worry if you don't know or don't have an NI number – just leave your contact details during the online registration process, and your local council electoral services will get in touch.

How did people get civic and democratic rights in the first place?

The expansion of voting rights has often been the result of long and hard-fought campaigns and movements by ordinary people. For example, the Suffragettes fought for decades to win women the right to vote. Understanding this history helps us appreciate the importance of these rights and why it's crucial to use them in our democracy.

Where can I start or sign official petitions?

A petition is a text with a group of signatures from individuals requesting the UK Government or another authority to act on a specific issue. It's a way for individuals and groups to raise concerns, demand changes in law or policy, or call for specific interventions. Official petitions appear on the Parliament's website at petition.parliament.uk. To initiate a petition on the UK Government and Parliament website, you must be a British citizen or a UK resident. Once you have created your petition and secured five initial supporters, it will undergo a review process and be published if it meets established standards. You can only sign a petition once.

Upon reaching 10,000 signatures, the government will issue a response. At 100,000 signatures, the petition may be considered for parliamentary debate. Most petitions that achieve this milestone are debated unless the issue has been addressed recently.

FAQS

How can I find out about volunteering opportunities in my area?

There are many volunteering opportunities in London. This website <https://simplyvolunteerlondon.uk/> can help you find an opportunity that you are interested in. There are also a number of Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) across London, organisations that support local voluntary and community opportunities. You can also find info about volunteering opportunities on the London City Hall website at www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/volunteering.

How can we find out who our representatives are to write to them?

You have many representatives: your local councillor, Member of Parliament (MP), Mayor of London and London Assembly members. You can write to them, or even meet them, even if you are not eligible to vote. To find out the details of your representatives, head to <https://www.writetothem.com/>. You can contact London City Hall and the Mayor of London at www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-mayor-does/contact-city-hall-or-mayor

What is the difference between the Greater London Authority and the Mayor of London?

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is the regional authority for London and is made up of the Mayor, who sets strategic priorities for London in areas like transport and housing, and the London Assembly, made of 25 members, that holds the Mayor accountable and also develops its own policies. You can find more at www.london.gov.uk

Where can I find more information and support on voting?

Link to information on candidates in your area:

<https://whocanivote.co.uk/>

Link to the Greater London Authority's Democracy Hub where you can find more political literacy resources, including FAQs in 15 community languages:

<https://www.registertovote.london/>

For tailored support on your democratic rights, simply text the number for the Greater London Authority's WhatsApp Chatbot: +44 7908 820136